



Diamondhead Survives!!!

The Krewe of Diamondhead celebrates Carnival, in defiance of Katrina. Page 14

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VOL. 114, NO. 17 BAY ST. LOUIS, MISSISSIPPI

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ONE SECTION, 14 PAGES

75 CENTS

Saturday
Feb 25, 2006

Legion Post 77 members gather

American Legion Post 77 and Ladies Aux. will have a general membership meeting on Wednesday, March 1 at 7 p.m. at the tent on the post grounds, 208 Coleman Ave.

Pearlinton water meeting

The monthly meeting of the Board of Commissioners originally scheduled for Thursday, March 2, 2006 has been rescheduled for Monday, March 6, at 5:30 p.m. at the Pearlinton Fire Dept. Conference Trailer.

St. Paul parade in Pass Christian

The St. Paul Carnival Assoc. Mardi Gras parade will roll on Sunday, Feb. 26, beginning at noon. Grand Marshal will be ABC News' Robin Roberts.

Krewe of Real People is ready

The Krewe of Real People will roll Mardi Gras Day. The parade will line up at Commegere Park in Bay St. Louis at 11 a.m. and will begin at 1 p.m. There will be no entry fee. If you are interested in taking part, please contact Tequila Hall at 228-342-0883 or Sharon Alexander, 228-493-2092.

Free trees for Katrina victims

The Arbor Day Foundation is contributing free trees to be planted by Katrina victims (five per family) March 4 at the BSL Depot, Waveland City Hall Complex & Annunciation Gym & School in Kiln at Kiln-DeLisle Rd.

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Carnival Time



Echo staff photo by Dwayne Bremer
Parade Marshal Kathleen Koch of CNN toasts the king & queen Friday during Bay Catholic Elementary's annual Mardi Gras parade in Bay St. Louis.

Countdown to Mardi Gras in Bay St. Louis

BY DWAYNE BREMER
Staff Writer

Mardi Gras day in Bay St. Louis has residents looking forward to an afternoon of fun, as parades and block parties will give residents a chance to forget about Katrina and have a good time.

The Krewe of Real People

CARNIVAL--PAGE 9



SCAM--PAGE 9

Bay widow alleges contractor 'scam'

BY DWAYNE BREMER
Staff Writer

Six months after Hurricane Katrina placed four feet of water into her house, Ruby Otis is dealing with a tragedy that is more cruel than the storm itself.

Otis, an 89-year old widow,

said Thursday that she recently discovered that the man she had placed her trust in to fix her home had scammed her out of nearly \$15,000 dollars. Otis also believes that the man took tens of thousands of dollars' worth of her possessions.



89-year-old widow Ruby Otis says a contractor allegedly took thousands of dollars to repair her storm-damaged Bay St. Louis home, then failed to perform the agreed-upon work. Now she can't find him.

Echo staff photo by Dwayne Bremer

Call us at The Sea Coast Echo at our voice mail messaging system: (228) 467-5474

MSU planners propose 'coastal paradise' for MS beachfront

Thoughtful, long-term planning today could transform the hurricane-battered Mississippi Gulf Coast of tomorrow into an environmentally friendly "coastal paradise" or "Central Park of the Deep South."

So say 150 Mississippi State students who participated in a recent, weeklong exploration of coastal reconstruction issues stemming from last summer's Hurricane Katrina, arguably the worst natural disaster in U.S. history.

"The primary goal of the charrette was as an educational exercise for the students; however, we will be sending copies of the report to local and state officials," said Jason B. Walker, a assistant professor of landscape architecture and coordinator of the January event.

A report stemming from the charrette--another name for an architectural brainstorming session--included recommendations to:

Begin establishing a "coastal paradise" by moving the main CSX railroad freight line and U.S. Highway 90 inland to protect them from future weather catastrophes.

Create a 75-mile Mississippi coastline punctuated with scenic pockets of open space and parklands in some areas to contrast clusters of urban development at other, more protected locations, while restoring much of the area's natural

ecology.

Edge the northern side of the half-mile-deep beachfront buffer zone with a commuter rail system away from the water, using the existing freight rail tracks to serve both the new parklands and urban developments.

Develop inland growth centers to attract property owners away from the beach.

Provide transit centers every five or six miles along the new commuter rail system, served by loop roads from the highway or train to the beachfront.

Ensure a more environmentally friendly and scenic beachfront seascap by re-vegetating the area with live oak trees, maritime systems and salt marshes.

The charrette was organized by the Denver, Colo.-based Design Workshop Inc. in partnership with MSU's landscape architecture department. Leading the effort was Design Workshop's chief design officer, Todd Johnson, founding partner Don Ensign and landscape architect Jeremiah Dumas, a Prentiss native and MSU alumnus.

Other key participants included Gulfport Mayor Brent Warr, Mississippi Development Authority director Leland Speed, ecologist and author Janisse Ray, and geologist Allen Lowrie.

The students contributed a great deal of time and effort to the

plan," said Michael Seymour, also an MSU assistant professor of landscape architecture. "This was more than just a class project to them. They clearly wanted to give something back to the coastal communities."

Warr, one of the elected coast officials who would have to make such a plan happen, spent parts of two days meeting with the MSU students providing some real-world perspectives concerning financial considerations and political constraints.

"You are talking about three counties (Jackson, Harrison and Hancock), or a regional scale," Walker noted. "Cost is a factor, but good planning/design that evaluates and addresses economic community, environment and artistic issues will, in the long run produce a viable solution. If you address only one or two issues, what are you solving?"

Other major sponsors included Michael Hatcher & Associates of Memphis Tenn., and The Landscape Studio of Hattiesburg.

In addition to landscape architecture, the collaborative effort involved students in architecture, civil engineering, environmental planning, real estate, and business. The university's Carl Small Town Center, the College of Architecture, Art and Design's research and extension arm, also was represented.

Divided into 24 teams, each group was given a six-mile-by-six-mile parcel and asked to explore the economic, environmental, social, and aesthetic aspects of the land in terms of open space, transportation, land use, and a projected 20 percent population growth rate over the next 20 years.

Eventually, a single final map 25 feet wide by 12.5 feet high was produced, integrating the work of each team into one cohesive plan for the region.

"One student even called Mississippi 'The Central Park of the Deep South,'" said Walker, "and created a drawing that shows the lush green of the rural region edged by surrounding urbanization of New Orleans and Mobile, Ala."

"It may take 50 years to remake the coast and make it work economically and socially for people," he added. "But planning could begin now, recognizing we can't just go on living the way we used to."

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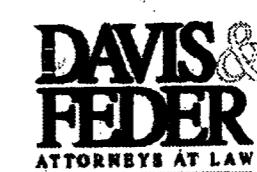
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Gulf Opportunity Zone briefing in Bay St. Louis

SEA COAST ECHO

Hancock County business owners looking for funds for rebuilding or business expansion, developers interested in funding low/moderate income housing or any business that cleaned up facilities or provided employee housing after Katrina are invited to a briefing on financial opportunities through the Gulf Opportunity Zone Act. Because of the wide-ranging nature of the provisions of the act, large and small business

across the coast may find financial incentives to assist in recovery. The briefing will take place at the Bay St. Louis library on Friday, March 3. Attorneys from Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens and Cannada whose firm assisted in writing the legislation will present the workshop from 8:30-10:30 a.m.

The federal tax provisions created in the Act are designed to improve financial health and provide creative financing

for businesses and governmental entities in the Gulf Coast region. Provisions include accelerated depreciation, increased business expensing, operating loss carryback extensions, tax credits for building rehabilitation, expensing for clean up costs, tax credits for businesses engaged in employee housing or retention and other provisions. Space is limited. Please call the Hancock County Chamber of Commerce at 467-9048 to reserve a space.

Waveland Civic Association St. Patrick's Day parade

SEA COAST ECHO

The Waveland Civic Association's annual St. Patrick's parade is scheduled to roll on Saturday, March 11, at 2 p.m.

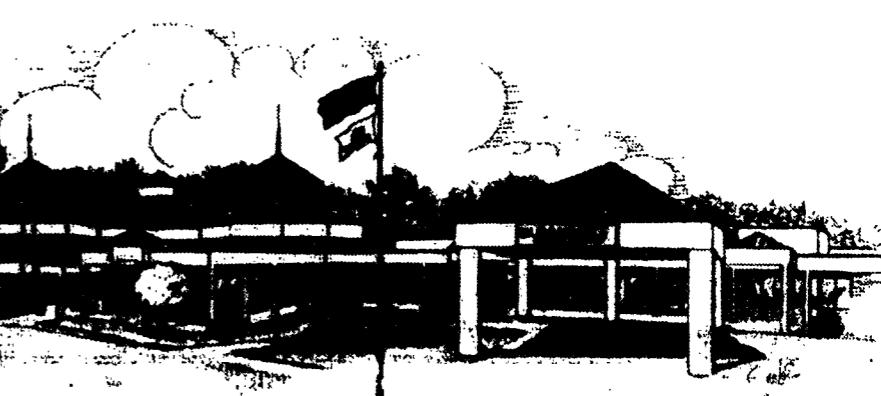
The parade's new route will be along Highway 90 in Waveland, using the same route as the Nericid's parade. The parade will line up in the K-Mart parking lot and proceed east down Highway 90, take a u-turn in front of the U.S. Post Office and continue west up Highway 90, then disband in the Our Shopping Center parking lot. Anyone interested in

submitting a float or other entry in the WCA's St. Patrick's parade may contact association president, Jay Fountain at 467-2198. The fee for family floats will be \$40 and for business and organization floats the fee will be \$75.

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Outpatient rehab services, including cardiac rehab, are offered at HMC's Diamondhead Complex, located at Shepherd Square (access road alongside Diamondhead Supermarket). Several local physicians are currently seeing patients in this complex.

FAMILY PRACTICE:

Bert Chevis, M.D. - Mon./Tues./Thurs Shepherd Sq. Diamondhead Wed./Fri. 149 Drinkwater BSL 467-8422
Sidney Chevis, M.D., 644 Dunbar Ave., BSL, M-Thurs 8-3; (228) 467-9238
Roberta Chilimigas, M.D. - Temporary office at her Waveland clinic, (228) 467-9281
Ron Kellum, M.D. - Indian Hill, Diamondhead, (228) 586-9229
David Roberts, M.D. - Gex Road, Diamondhead, (228) 255-4300

INTERNAL MEDICINE:

James Crittenden, M.D. - M-F, 9am till 3, (228) 467-1414
Rowe Crowder, M.D. - 149 Drinkwater Blvd., Bay St. Louis, (228) 463-1649
Arcana Bansai, M.D. (Coastal Fam. Health) Walk-Ins, Hospital Drive, BSL

PEDIATRICS:

Scott Neale M.D. - Mon. & Wed., 9 am-12, Shepherd Square, Diamondhead Tues., Thurs., Fri., 149 Drinkwater, Bay St. Louis 467-2200
Shama Shakir, M.D. - (Coastal Fam. Health) Walk-Ins, Hospital Drive, BSL
Bertrand Sy, M.D. - Opening Early 2006

PODIATRY:

Jeff Benzing, D.P.M. - Tues., Shepherd Sq., Diamondhead 586-0014

OB/GYN:

Noel Duplantier, M.D. - 1009 Benigno Lane, BSL, (228) 467-2555
Jerry Karabin, M.D. - Mon. & Fri., Shepherd Square, Diamondhead, 228-424-2855
Dimitri Yanez, M.D. - 1009 Benigno Lane, BSL, (228) 467-2555

CARDIOLOGY:

Mohammad Awaad, M.D. - Shepherd Square, Diamondhead, Tues. afternoons Bassam Baroudi, M.D. - Shepherd Square, Diamondhead (Wed., noon-3) 586-0014
Jay Libys, M.D. - Gex Road, Diamondhead by appointment (228) 868-5555
Wakkas Tayara, M.D. - Shepherd Square, Diamondhead, (Thurs. 9-11) 586-0014

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Richard Akin DDS, 1013 Hwy 90, BSL, (228) 467-4229

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Arrest Record

Editor's note: The following is a list of arrests logged at the Hancock County Justice Facility from Feb. 16-24. Appearance on the jail log is not indicative of guilt, merely a record that an arrest has been made.

STAFF REPORT

Jay Kelly, 35, suspended license, probation violation
Billy Johnson, 40, exposure to HIV
William Krause, 45, public drunk
Marvin Hudson, 43, simple assault domestic
Jose Valdovindo, 40, disturbance of family
Pamela Ricca, 48, public drunk
Michael Pressley, 35, DUI
James Sherwood, 39,

disorderly conduct, resisting arrest
Tina Cook, 35, trespassing
Carrie Gill, 35, trespassing
Robert Blackwell, 36, simple assault domestic
Jesse Loya, 48, simple assault domestic
Heather Davis, 22, disorderly conduct
Joshua Henley, 20, disorderly conduct
David Babineaux, 32, disorderly conduct
Jacon Johnson, 19, public drunk
Leo Perez, 25, suspended license
Charles Cibic, 49, DUI
Steven Hanson, 24, no insurance, suspended license
Ginger Harmon, 40, public drunk, disorderly conduct x2
Donald Genesquires,

34, disorderly conduct, public drunk
Daniel Rodriguez, 40, public drunk
Bill McGowan, 26, simple assault domestic
Abraham Orellana, disorderly conduct
Jim Butler, 47, malicious mischief
Leon Saucier, 55, shoplifting
Adrienne Foster, DUI
Jeffrey Gabbard, 32, public drunk
Johnathan Ladner, 24, public drunk
Keon Hawkins, 25, 3 years to serve
Brandon Leach, 23, possession of controlled substance
Matthew Davis, 34, DUI, no insurance, failure to yield
Ekrem Ahmetovic, 44, trespass
Jerry Heirsch, 35, sim-

ple assault domestic
Kyle Tupper, 22, disorderly conduct
Marlon Kowalski, 39, possession of paraphernalia
Evangeline Schwartz, 32, Bond revoked
Nicholas Schwartz, 32, Bond revoked
Joshua Jackson, 18, surrender off bond, 3 counts of burglary, grand larceny, c.o.c.
Malcom Harrington, 45, disturbance of peace
John Snow, 60, DUI 2nd, no license, careless driving, no insurance
Harvey Ledbetter, 54, public drunk
Linward Travis, 45, contempt of court
Virgil Dahl, 40, possession of crack, possession of controlled substance with intent



Willie Shook, Assistant Principal of Hancock High School accepts a \$2000 check on behalf of HHS Key Club from Bay Saint Louis Kiwanis president, Virgil Harris and treasurer, Brehm Bell. The check was made possible through the generosity of Kiwanians from around the world was designated as a "Hurricane Katrina Relief Gift" for Hancock High School Key Club.

Casino Magic BSL aims for late fall re-opening

SEA COAST ECHO

The Bridges Golf Club at Casino Magic Bay St. Louis will be closing March 6, as it undergoes a six month long facelift project. Officials at the severely damaged Casino Magic Bay St. Louis announced the renovation project today as a means of restoring the Arnold Palmer designed and Audubon Society recognized golf course to its original splendor. Following the renovation project The Bridges will re-open mid-September.

Seaside Golf Development of Pensacola, Florida, will head up the multi-million dollar renovation and Arnold Palmer Course Design Company will oversee the project to insure the integrity of the original Arnold Palmer Signature design remains intact. The initial phase of the project will begin with plowing under the over-seeded grass that was installed shortly after Hurricane Katrina. The entire golf course was over-seeded following the storm in an effort to re-open the golf course as quickly as possible. According to John

Chaszar, Senior Director of Resort Operations, "we had a sense of urgency immediately following Katrina to restore one of our business entities. It was and still is, extremely important to us to send a strong message to the community that Casino Magic Bay St. Louis is committed to re-building. In order to re-open quickly we moved forward with mitigating as much of the hurricane damage as possible." During the renovation project, The Bridges employees will be utilized in other capacities at Casino Magic or, by Seaside Golf Development. The renovation project will allow The Bridges to maintain its very important, Arnold Palmer Signature designation.

Along with the installation of over ninety five acres of a specially formulated, hybrid sod, the facelift will include reconstruction of all the greens, fairways, rough, tee boxes, sand bunkers, drainage systems and renovations to the club house. Over several hundred trees will be planted to replace the trees felled

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'Healthy Kids' Initiative protects MS's kids from tobacco and drugs

BY GOV. HALEY BARBOUR

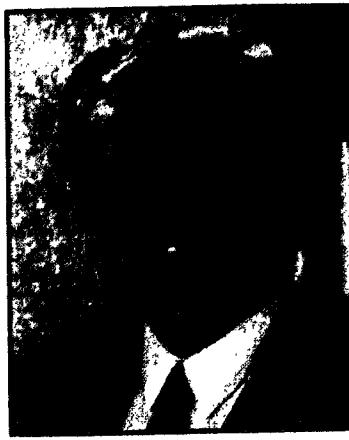
The health of Mississippi's kids is at risk from many factors, whether it is cigarette smoking or exposure to illegal drugs. Mississippi needs and deserves a constitutional and comprehensive plan to prevent our kids from getting hooked on tobacco just as Mississippi needs to beef up our efforts to stop our kids from getting hooked on drugs. We can do both with the \$20 million which has been unconstitutionally diverted to the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi annually since December 22, 2000.

As I've said in the past, the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi has done some good work, but Mississippi's taxpayers have not gotten their money's worth for the \$100 million the Partnership has spent, an annual amount twice as much as Mississippi spends fighting the scourge of illegal drugs.

There has never been an accounting of how the Partnership has spent this \$100 million given to the Legislature, the Governor, the Health Care Trust Fund Board, or the taxpayers. While it is claimed that the Partnership is audited, no certified audit of the Partnership's use of the state's money has ever been provided.

Even without the benefit of a comprehensive, independent audit of the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi, there is no denying there has been waste and abuse of taxpayer dollars by the organization. For example, the Partnership spent \$20,000 on a newspaper ad that ran in newspapers across the state that had nothing to do with keeping youth from smoking. Instead, it was an ad praising former Attorney General Mike Moore for winning an award. In addition, the Partnership has awarded monetary grants which are tinged with politics such as the \$2.9 million given by the Partnership to the Legislative Black Caucus' foundation. These actions question whether the Partnership's priorities are more focused on politics than on stopping kids from smoking.

Mississippi's taxpayers should not have to rely on an unaccountable private organization like the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi to fight youth smoking. Mississippi needs a new,



Gov. Haley Barbour

comprehensive approach to fighting tobacco, and the diseases it causes, which builds on the things the Partnership has done well, but includes oversight to prevent the waste, abuse, and politicizing of public health efforts.

Recent legislative proposals and comments by the Chairman of the Partnership's Board, Mike Moore, indicate there is agreement that taxpayer money used by the Partnership must be appropriated by the Legislature and not unconstitutionally diverted by a Jackson County Chancery Court. All these monies must be deposited in the Health Care Trust Fund and then appropriated.

I have advocated the \$20 million be appropriated for Medicaid, since the federal government would then match the \$20 million on a more than 3 to 1 basis, generating a total of more than \$80 million of health care spending for Mississippi's children.

Today, in light of Medicaid's improved financial condition, I propose a constitutional

and comprehensive program to reduce youth smoking and to fight the scourge of illegal drugs, while improving health care not only for our school children but for all Mississippians.

In this session, the Legislature should appropriate the previously diverted \$20 million out of the Health Care Expendable Fund for the following purposes:

- * Expand the School Nurse Program

Currently, more than 60 school nurses who implement tobacco prevention programs serve more than 50 school districts. This program's

capabilities for education and outreach will be doubled by appropriating \$5 million to the Mississippi Department of Health.

- * Maintain Anti-Tobacco Education and Advertising

We will continue to educate our children about the dangers of tobacco use by appropriating \$5 million to the Mississippi Department of Health for a coordinated advertising campaign

to educate our children about the health risks of tobacco use. The Department of Health can contract with the same firms that do the marketing/advertising campaigns for the Partnership, if it chooses.

- * Expand Cancer Research, Screening, Education, and Treatment

One of the University of Mississippi Medical Center Cancer Institute's

primary research focuses is on the treatment and eventual cure of lung cancer. An appropriation of \$5 million to the University of Mississippi Medical Center will support the development of this Cancer Institute, enabling the Cancer Institute to continue to recruit nationally recognized scientists and support their research activities, while supporting day-to-day programs for cancer screening and education across the state.

- * Increase the State's Support for the Fight Against Drugs

There is no greater health threat to Mississippi's children than illegal narcotics and drug crime. An additional \$5 million for the Bureau of Narcotics will increase the state's support for the fight against drugs and provide 50% more narcotics agents to investigate and arrest the drug dealers who prey on our children.

- * Ensure Annual Accountability of All Funds

These appropriations should be reviewed each year by the Legislature to assess the effectiveness of the programs and to revisit the priorities in the context of the overall state budget. Where possible and eligible for federal 3 to 1 matching funds, all programs should be provided through Medicaid funds to maximize the benefits derived from the \$20 million.

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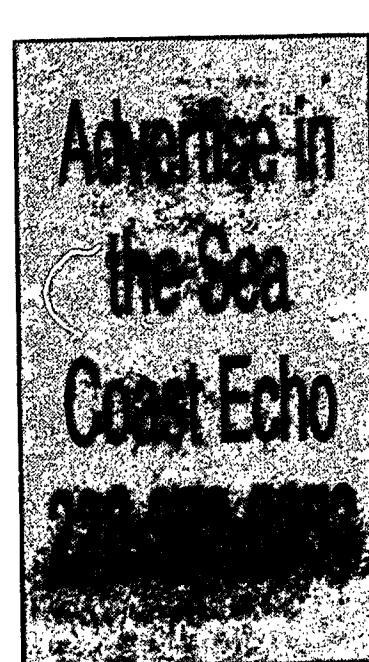
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Together We Heal

Taylor sends hurricane preparedness suggestions to Secretary Chertoff

SEA COAST ECHO

Earlier this week, U.S. Congressman Gene Taylor sent Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff a letter with initial recommendations for a national hurricane preparedness plan. His letter was a response to Secretary Chertoff's request for suggestions at a House Transportation Committee hearing held yesterday.

During the hearing, Chertoff indicated that, with less than four months to go before the start of the 2006 hurricane season, his office had no plan of action for the evacuation and relocation of Gulf Coast residents or the FEMA travel trailers that tens of thousands of South Mississippians call home.

"Given the poor response to Hurricane Katrina, I was disappointed to hear that the head of Homeland Security didn't even have



U.S. Rep. Gene Taylor

a basic framework for a preparedness plan," said Taylor. "I'm amazed that with the depleted resources and compromised infrastructure in the places most vulnerable to hurricanes, not a single person at Homeland Security or FEMA has thought about a way to evacuate coastal residents and secure the 40,000 travel trailers and mobile homes in South Mississippi."

In his letter, Taylor warns Chertoff of highways congested with thousands of Gulf residents towing their trailers if a hurricane evacuation

is ordered. Taylor also advises Chertoff to coordinate with FEMA and other state emergency management agencies to formulate a detailed plan that would allow people to secure trailers in low-risk areas and temporarily relocate trailers located in high-risk areas.

"No one seems to be applying the lessons we learned in Katrina to future hurricane planning. Hurricane season comes every year. You don't get a year off from Mother Nature," said Taylor.

"I would think that the images of New Orleans and South Mississippi and the continuing effects of that storm would be enough to motivate Homeland Security officials to do everything they can to limit loss of life and property this year. I sure as heck don't want to go through another year like this." Taylor is also concerned about the mounting costs to American

taxpayers. "Right now, we've got almost 40,000 travel trailers and mobile homes sitting in South Mississippi. Those temporary housing units cost the American taxpayer about \$14,000 a piece," said Taylor. "Without a comprehensive hurricane preparedness plan, FEMA may as well be flushing that money down the toilet."

Taylor's suggestions included the wind-testing of FEMA travel trailers, a relocation plan for FEMA trailers, the designation of a secure trailer relocation site, contingency contracts for hauling and securing trailers at the site, and a public education program to publicize the minimum vehicle standards for towing trailers with personal vehicles.

Taylor's letter to Chertoff requests a response from the Department of Homeland Security within two weeks.

Lott -- FEMA reform

when it's appropriate.

My bill preserves FEMA's role as the lead agency for disaster response and puts under FEMA jurisdiction programs traditionally associated with FEMA, like the National Flood Insurance Program and the Stafford Disaster Relief Act. The organizational restructuring in my bill will require that FEMA carry out its tradi-

tional mission of reducing the loss of life and property with a pre-planned emergency management strategy.

I'm also working with the Senate Homeland Security Committee on some additional changes for FEMA which I believe will be helpful. These include initiatives to get more reconstruction contracts to local businesses and to have

more accountability for contractor performance.

Is this legislation going to solve every problem associated with the Katrina recovery? No. Will it mean that FEMA will respond flawlessly to every future disaster? No. But it will help shape a better FEMA, geared toward quicker action and thorough accountability. If FEMA can better manage

quicker action and accountability to those it serves, just maybe America's next disaster won't be quite so disastrous. (2/23/06)

Senator Lott welcomes any questions or comments about this column. Write to: U.S. Senator Trent Lott, 487 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (Attn: Press Office)

Continued from Page 4

Public warned about ongoing identity theft e-mail scheme

Jo Anne Barnhart, Commissioner of Social Security, and Patrick O'Carroll, Jr., Inspector General of Social Security, issued a warning today about a new email scam that has surfaced recently.

The Agency has received several reports of an email message being circulated addressed to "Dear Social Security Number And Card owner" and purporting to be from the Social Security Administration. The message informs the reader "that someone illegally is using your Social Security number and assuming your identity" and directs the reader to a website designed to look like Social Security's Internet website.

"I am outraged that

someone would target an unsuspecting public in this manner," said Commissioner Barnhart. "I have asked the Inspector General to use all the resources at his command to find and prosecute whoever is perpetrating this fraud."

Once directed to the phony website, the individual is asked to confirm their identity with "Social Security and bank information." Specific information about the individual's credit card number, expiration date and PIN number is then requested. "Whether on our online website or by phone, Social Security will never ask you for your credit card information or your PIN number," Commissioner Barnhart said.

Inspector General

O'Carroll recommends people always take precautions when giving out personal information. "You should never provide your Social Security number or other personal information over the Internet or by telephone unless you are extremely confident of the source to whom you are providing the information," O'Carroll said.

To report receipt of this email message or other suspicious activity to Social Security's Office of Inspector General, please call the OIG Hotline at 1-800-269-0271. (If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call the OIG TTY number at 1-866-501-2101). A Public Fraud Reporting form is also available online at OIG's website www.socialsecurity.gov/oig.

you ever see a dog going without basic necessities like food, water, shelter, or veterinary care, call authorities right away. Your call could save a life.

For more information about helping neglected dogs, please visit HelpingAnimals.com.

Sincerely,
Alisa Mullins
Senior Writer
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
501 Front St.
Norfolk, Va. 23510
757-962-8392

Letters

Continued from Page 4

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Hancock County Solid Waste Authority will receive requests from developers and operators for Class I rubbish sites in Hancock County, Mississippi. Said requests must be submitted by the landowner of any proposed sites in writing to the Authority's administrator, Brenda Ford, P.O. Box 116, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520, on or before March 6, 2006 at 3:00 p.m.

The Authority will review all requests and make a determination of need as to whether additional sites are needed and/or will be included in the application process for a plan amendment. For more information regarding the submission of requests and for a request application please call, (228)467-2770.

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Fleet Survey Team assists with marine helicopter crash recovery in Africa

SEA COAST ECHO

Two Navy officers from the Fleet Survey Team (FST) at John C. Stennis Space Center (SSC) worked to locate a pair of Marine Corps helicopters and assisted in victim recovery after a crash that killed 10 U.S. military members off the coast of East Africa last week.

Lieutenant David Colbert and Ensign Christopher Tuggle were working in the African nation of Djibouti when two CH-53E Marine transport helicopters crashed in the Gulf of Aden on Friday, Feb. 17. Colbert and Tuggle were in Djibouti performing maritime hydrographic surveys along with two other FST members, Lt. Sean Yemm, hydrographer in charge of the mission, and Ensign Tina Billings.

The choppers were carrying 10 marines and two U.S. Air Force airmen on a training mission. All aboard except two Marines died in the crash near the coastal

town of Ras Siyyan. The survivors were evacuated to a military hospital in Germany.

Two of the victims were from coastal Mississippi and Louisiana. An investigation into the crashes is continuing, but U.S. officials said there were no indications of hostile fire or turbulent weather.

Fleet Survey Team is a subordinate command to the Naval Oceanographic Office (NAVOCEANO) at SSC. Its members deploy worldwide to perform maritime surveys in support of the U.S. warfighter. The downed helicopters were part of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, a U.S. military operation.

The crash occurred on Friday evening. As word began coming in to the U.S. military base at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, Ensign Billings acted as communications officer, relaying messages for Navy and Air Force units who would be involved in the search and recovery.

The 304th Air Force Rescue Squadron requested help from the Fleet Survey crew because they were already working in the region with a sonar-equipped rigid-hull inflatable boat capable of locating underwater hazards to navigation.

Early on Saturday, Feb. 18, Colbert and Tuggle left the mainland near Camp Lemonier, a U.S. military base. They piloted their open, 25-foot boat for three hours across 60 nautical miles of rough seas in the Gulf of Aden. They made the trip using charts provided by the Djiboutian Navy but had no radio communications with other U.S. military units until reaching the crash site.

"Getting out there and coming back was pretty rough," Colbert said.

Rescuers had been unable until then to cover much of the area surrounding the crash sites. Using sidescan sonar, the FST members pinpointed the precise underwater locations of the downed

choppers, as well as the body of one remaining victim.

Colbert and Tuggle then worked with U.S. Air Force rescue parachute jumpers and Navy demolition experts in removing the body of the last victim. At points during the mission, they encountered seas as high as eight feet.

"The Fleet Survey Team support to the warfighter transcended hydrographic surveys in this instance," said Cmdr. Todd Monroe, FST commanding officer at Stennis. "We are proud that our team members were able to provide on-scene sonar search capabilities to the Navy and Air Force search and recovery teams during this difficult and regrettable operation."

"It was clear the Marines were thankful for our help," Colbert said. "It was somber. It made anything we had to go through or any seas we had to fight worthwhile. I am thankful we had the opportunity to

participate, and I'm glad we were able to help."

NAVOCEANO, comprised of approximately 1,100 military, civilian and contractor personnel, is responsible for providing oceanographic products and services to all elements within the Department of Defense.

For more information about NAVOCEANO, visit [https://www.navo.navy.mil](http://www.navo.navy.mil).

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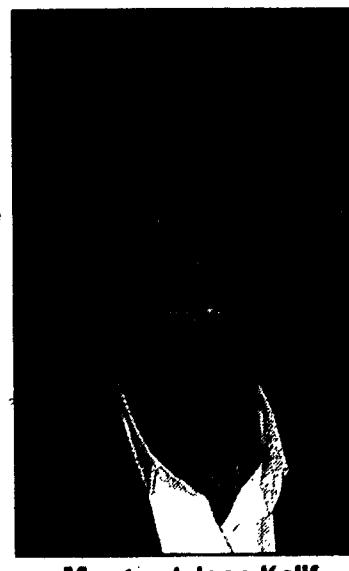
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Pass Christian Citizen of the Year



Margaret Jean Kalif

SEA COAST ECHO

The Pass Christian Rotary Club recently honored Margaret Jean Kalif as the 2005 Pass Christian Citizen of the Year. Ms. Kalif, a lifelong resident of the city, is a graduate of Pass Christian High School and holds a Bachelor's and Master in Education from USM and a Specialist from William Carey. She retired in May from teaching after 35 years. Margaret Jean has always been active in community and civic activities in Pass Christian. She spent 12 years as an Alderman in the Pass and serves on several City Committees. Furthermore, Ms. Kalif served on the first committee for 'Celebrate the Gulf.'

Following Hurricane Katrina, Ms. Kalif was an integral part of rebuilding efforts in Pass Christian despite the damage to her own home. She has served as

Director of The Village, Pass Christian's collection of strong-backed tents built by the Seabees to house city residents with no place to live. In addition, Ms. Kalif has started a database of Pass Christian citizens who

cannot afford to rebuild or repair their homes following the hurricane. Her database is helping to coordinate rebuilding efforts in Pass Christian. She is also a member of the Historic Preservation Committee.

Her hard work and dedication to the city of Pass Christian over the years and especially following Hurricane Katrina, made Margaret Jean Kalif an asset to the city and our 2005 Citizen of the Year.

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PAGE SEVEN PG



Back row left to right: Kelsey Ratcliff, Kristen Brewer, Brittney Bostick. Front row left to right: Callie Harrel, Brenee' Ferrell & Synthia Peck.

Hancock County DECA receives top honors at state conference

SEA COAST ECHO

The Hancock County Vocational Center Lodging and Hospitality DECA had an notable performance at the Mississippi DECA Career Development Conference in Tupelo, February 11-14, 2006. Competing with over 650 students from across Mississippi, six Hancock County DECA members received top honors.

Taking finalist medals were Synthia Peck, First Place Restaurant and Food Service Management Competency Event; Callie Harrel and Kelsey Ratcliff, Third Place Public Relations Chapter Event; Kristen Brewer and Brittney Bostick, judge. Students compet-

Sixth Place Hospitality Services Team Event; and Brenee' Ferrell, Sixth Place Marketing Management Services Competency Event.

During the two days of competition, students in competency and team events completed a 100-question test and participated in a role-play. The test evaluated the student's general knowledge in human relations, marketing, management, and entrepreneurship. The test also evaluated industry specific skills. These students also participated in a role-play that involved not only solving problems and making decisions, but also presenting those ideas to a judge. Students compet-

ing in the public relations project planned and implemented a public relations project before the actual conference. This year the project focused on marketing the Lodging and Hospitality program to freshmen.

The promotional plan was presented to a judge at the conference who evaluated the written manual and the student's explanation of the project.

Synthia Peck will advance in competition to the International DECA Career Development Conference in Dallas Texas on April 29-May 3. She will represent Hancock County and Mississippi at the highest level of competition in DECA. Hancock County DECA Advisor, Lady Stone Bruce will accompany Miss Peck on the trip and will also serve as Assistant Event Coordinator for Mississippi DECA.

Hightower, Business Services Management; and Kristen Peterson and Courtney Wilson; Travel and Tourism Team Decision Event.

Jennifer

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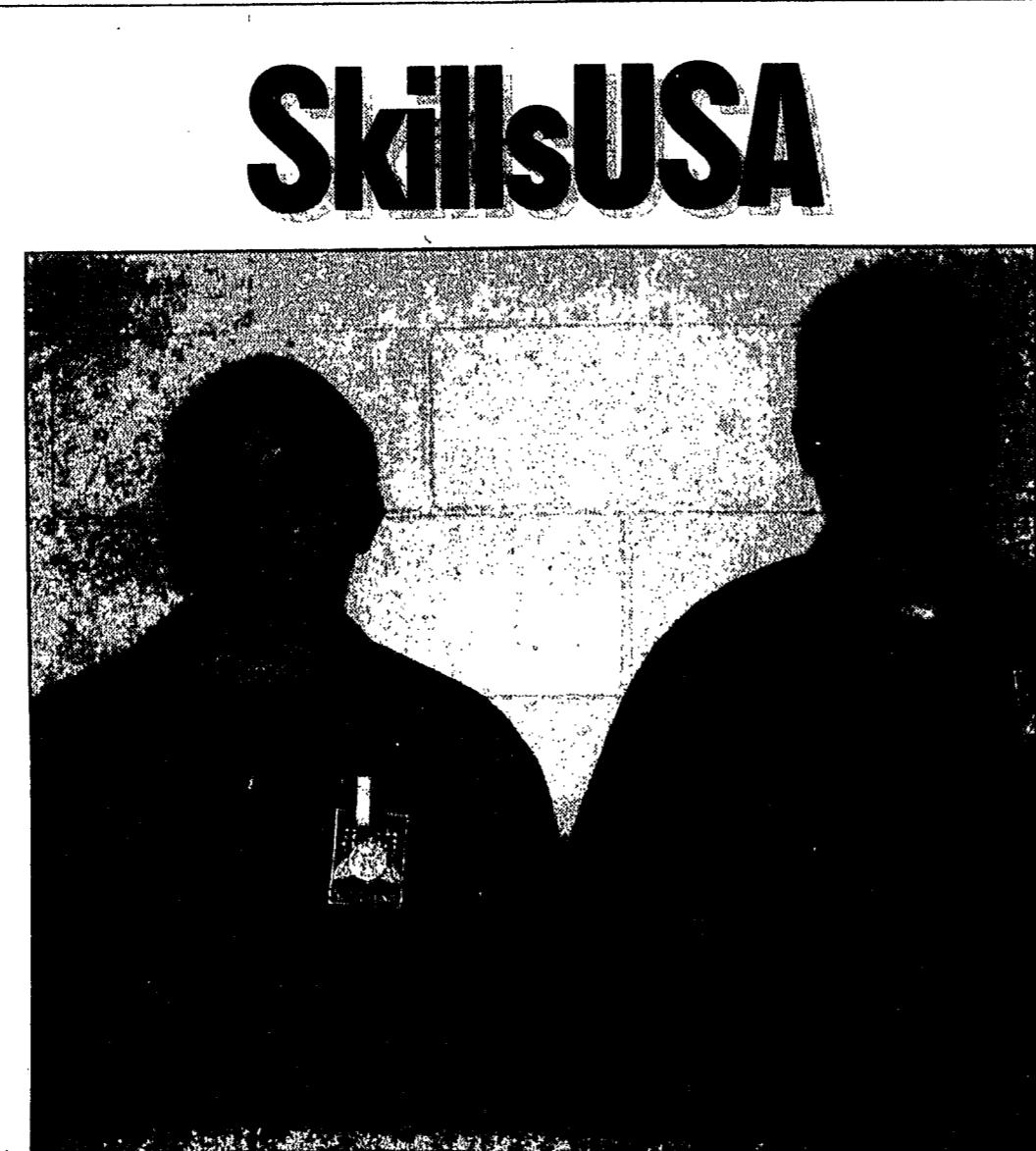
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The Hancock County Vo-Tech Center SkillsUSA chapter sponsored by Reggie Ladner, Metal Trades Instructor, participated in their district contest at Pearl River Community College with 11 other chapters including over 175 students. Drew Givens (left) placed 1st in Automotive Service Technology. Ben Burlette (right) placed 1st in Sheet Metal. Both students will advance to the SkillsUSA state conference in Jackson in April.

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Scam -- 89-year-old accuses contractor

Continued from Page 1

worth of antiques and other personal items from her home.

Otis has owned her home at 444 Victoria St. in Bay St. Louis for more than 50 years. She now in a FEMA trailer with her cat "Kittie".

"He was a slick one," Otis said of the contractor. "He really did me dirty. I have used almost all of my money to get my house fixed and he took it all. I just don't know what to do. I have no transportation, it's hard for me to get around."

Otis said that the man called himself Joe Browne, and he is about 47 years old. Otis said that she is not even sure if that is his real name.

Otis was introduced to Browne shortly after the storm, as he was an acquaintance of her daughter. Browne gave Otis a hand-written quote for \$19,500, using a Gulfport address. The quote included fixing 17 items inside and outside of Otis's home. Browne allegedly told Otis that she would be back in her home by Christmas, and that it was going to "look just like it was before the

storm," she said. He started working on the house in October.

"He did some work at first," Otis said. "I really trusted him, he even went to church with me and my friends."

Otis said that she would give Browne money on a regular basis for equipment, labor, and items that he said were necessary to fix the home. In fact, the only thing that Browne actually bought that is still in the house, she said - a used 40-gallon water heater. Otis kept all of her receipts, and the total of those receipts is nearly \$15,000 dollars, she said.

Otis said that she never questioned Browne's work until recently, because she spends her days at the Bay St. Louis Senior Citizen Center.

"I leave and go to the center every day at 8:30 and come back between two and 3 p.m. It was at this time when Browne claimed to be working on the house. He did do some work, but I think he was doing just enough to keep stringing me along."

Otis's home has new

sheet rock hung in two rooms, as well as some roof work. Piles of debris litter Otis's yard and the inside of her home.

Otis said that Browne had told her a while back that he was moving her antique furniture, dishes, and other items so that he could better work in the house.

As the months went by, Otis began to get impatient. Last week, Otis confronted Browne and questioned him about when the house would be finished, and when she would get her antiques back. Otis said that Browne then asked her for \$1,000 dollars to rent a U-Haul trailer to bring the antiques back from Gulfport. Otis gave the money to him on Feb. 21, she said, and hasn't seen him since.

Otis said that all of the man's tools are gone from the house, and that he has not answered any phone calls since Tuesday. Otis then discovered that other items were missing from her house, as well, she said.

Otis called the Bay St. Louis Police Department and reported the incident.

Investigator Tom

Burleson said that Otis will be signing charges of home repair fraud, and grand larceny.

"This is a sad case," Burleson said. "We will be actively seeking to find the suspect, and we are going to aggressively go after any one who is involved in this sort of crime."

Otis said that she has spent nearly all of the money that she got from FEMA on the home repairs.

"I can't get around, so it's going to be hard," Otis said. "I had trouble even getting food after the storm. Everything passes me over."

Otis's neighbors are outraged about what has taken place, and they have promised to help out.

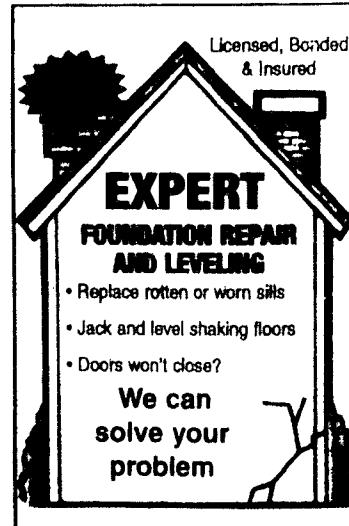
"Ruby is one of the sweetest ladies I have every met, and it's a shame that someone would take advantage of her," said Dianne Schwartz of 500 Victoria street. "We would hear him working sometimes, and Ruby would say that he was doing a good job. The guy even gave me a quote on my house. We are going to try to help

Ruby out. There are a lot of volunteers down here, and hopefully some can come and help her."

The penalty for home repair fraud and grand larceny could be up to 20 years under Mississippi state law. Each charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years.

"We want to stress to everyone that you should be careful about who you hire to do work for you," Burleson said. "Just go down to the building department, and see if the contractor is licensed and on the city's list. Please be careful, because there are a lot of people out there that just

want your money."



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Obituaries

**LOUELLA HANNA
HAROLD
JACKSON JR.
DORIS LADNER
WILLIAM
MCANDREW, JR.**



LOUELLA HANNA
LouElla Marie Hanna, 61, of Pearlington, MS passed away on Wednesday, February 22, 2006 in Gulfport, MS. She was a Christian who was born in Marks, LA and lived in Pearlington, MS for the past 18 years. She was a grandmother to over 150 foster children and was truly a warm hearted person. LouElla was very good with handcrafts and was a member of the Moose Lodge.

She is preceded in death by her 2 sons, Rusty Hanna and Paul Hanna; parents, William & Josephine Basye; 3 brothers and 3 sisters.

She is survived by her husband, Ronald Hanna of Pearlington, MS; 2 daughters, Katt Hosty & husband Jay of Lakeshore, MS; Judy Bello & husband Douglas of Pearlington, MS; brother, Freddie Basye & his wife Erna of Eaccombe, LA; sister, Carol Landry of Pearlington, MS; and

Pearlington, MS; and a special friend Brenda Biehl of Waveland, MS. She is also survived by 9 grandchildren, Beau, Katelin, Damon, Selena, Neva, Brianna, Justin, Rachelle and Sommer.

Visitation is on Monday, February 27, 2006 from 1:00 pm until 4:00 pm at Edmond Fahey Funeral Home in Bay St. Louis, MS. The Prayer Service will follow at 4:00 pm. A private graveside service will be held at a later date.

Edmond Fahey Funeral Home in Bay St. Louis, MS is in charge of the arrangements.

**HAROLD
JACKSON JR.**

Harold Jackson, Jr., 82 of Lakeshore, MS died on Tuesday, February 21, 2006 in Lakeshore, MS. He was born on December 19, 1923 in Nicholson, MS and has lived in Lakeshore, MS for the past 35 years. He was a Veteran serving in World War II and was a member of the American Legion. He retired as a Tugboat Captain. He is preceded in death by his parents, Harold Jackson, Sr., Rita Favre Doyle; 2 brothers, Pete Jackson, Arnold Jackson; and a sister, Mildred Jackson.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Doris Lusich Jackson of Lakeshore, MS; his 3 sons, Marlon Jackson and his companion, Mary of Lakeshore, MS; Arnold Jackson and his companion, Laura of Lakeshore, MS; and

Randy Jackson and his wife, Karen of Bayou Phillips Community; and his sister, Joyce Pullman of Pearlington, MS. He is also survived by 5 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

A visitation will be held on Friday, February 24, 2006 from 1:00 pm until 2:00 pm at Edmond Fahey Funeral Home in Bay St. Louis, MS. A Prayer Service will be at 2:00 pm. Interment will follow in Lakeshore Cemetery in Lakeshore, MS.

Edmond Fahey Funeral Home in Bay St. Louis, MS is in charge of the arrangements.

DORIS LADNER

Doris Boone Ladner, 78, of Waveland, MS died on Monday, February 20, 2006 in Bay St. Louis, MS. She was a native of Purvis, MS and a resident of Waveland, MS for the past 46 years. She was a member of the 1st Baptist Church in Bay St. Louis, MS. Doris was also a veteran serving in the U.S. Army. She was a longtime employee retiring from Merchants Bank.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Raymond H. Ladner; parents, John & Bertha Edwina Smith Boone; step daughter, Iris Ladner Prine; and 2 sisters, Myrtle Whiddon and Jewell Anderson.

She was survived by 2 step sons, Ray Ladner of Long Beach, MS, Jerry Ladner of Covington, LA; step daughter, Linda L. VonAntz of Waveland,

MS; and 7 Step grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Thursday at the Edmond Fahey Funeral Home. Burial followed in Waveland Cemetery in Waveland. Edmond Fahey Funeral Home in Bay St. Louis is in charge of the arrangements.

**WILLIAM
MCANDREW, JR.**

William Patrick McAndrew, Jr., 18, of Poplarville, MS died Tuesday, February 21, 2006 at Hancock Medical Center in Bay St. Louis, MS. A native of Slidell, LA, McAndrew worked with the Corp of Engineers and was a member of the Lighthouse of Hope Assembly of God Church. He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Fred Kron.

Survivors include: his parent, Pat and Elaine McAndrew of Poplarville; maternal grandmother, Esther Kron of Poplarville, paternal grandparents, Monte and Golda McAndrew of Slidell; three brothers, Michael McAndrew of Slidell, Mike McAndrew of Pensacola, FL, and Mark McAndrew of Slidell; and two sisters, Kathy Scuotto of Avellino, Italy and Kimberly McAndrew of Poplarville. Services will be held Saturday, February 25, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. in the Lighthouse of Hope Assembly of God in Poplarville. There will be no visitation.

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Private -- cities, county meet

Continued from Page 1

public body at which official acts may be taken upon a matter which the public body has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory power." Meetings that are covered under this statute include "informal meetings" of a public body and its staff although no votes were taken, luncheon meetings, work sessions also known as "workshops," and joint meetings of two or more public bodies. The only meetings that do not qualify as public meetings are "chance meetings," or "social gatherings."

Under the Open Meetings Act, all meetings including special ones usually must be announced at least five days in advance before the meeting takes place. The meeting was posted on the chalkboard of the Bay St. Louis City Council boardroom on Tuesday evening Feb. 20, and Mayor Eddie Favre announced it in his report to the council on Tuesday.

On Thursday, the Hancock County Board of Supervisors office told the Echo that there were no minutes taken at the meeting.

The Open Meetings Act states that "minutes must be kept for all open and executive sessions of a public body covered by the law." The minutes must include, what members were present, date,

time, place, and accurate recordings of findings. The minutes must also cover any vote taken or any other public body request.

Prior to the meeting on Wednesday, Hancock County Board President Rocky Pullman told the Echo that the meeting was going to be held in executive session, meaning that the meeting would be closed to the public.

Several members who attended the meeting said Thursday that it never went into executive session because there was no one present from the public. County Attorney Ronnie Artigues said the the meeting was in fact held in executive session, and, several other officials who attended the meeting did comment on its subject matter.

"The main topic that was discussed was possible litigation about the proposed six-

county wastewater commission that is being proposed by the Governor's office," Artigues said.

"The meeting was a chance for all of us to get on the same page," Chancery Clerk Tim Kellar said Thursday. "We did not take any action at the meeting, there was just a lot of constructive discussion, as well as some litigation items and purchasing plans."

At Tuesday evening's

Bay council meeting, the council heard from, Favre, who said that there is \$600 million in funds that are allocated to the six lower counties from the federal government.

The money is to be used to fix and update waste water systems that are either outdated or have been damaged by the storm.

The governor's office is seeking to create a six-county board that would replace many of the existing waste water entities.

Favre explained that whether the city wanted to join or not, an answer needed to be given because time is running out.

Last year, the city of Bay St. Louis declined to join the six-county venture, citing several reasons. City attorney Donald Rafferty told the council that there would be a nine-member board, with each county having only one permanent vote, and three at-large votes. Favre also explained that even if the six counties were to get the \$600 million, then that money alone would not be enough to fix even half of the six counties' needs.

"We are still looking at this as an option," said Butterworth. "It is too early to decide on anything, but we will listen to what is being proposed."

Seymour said another issue that was discussed

at the closed meeting was the Mar 15 deadline for 100 percent reimbursement on debris removal.

"We have made it clear to the governor's office about our need for an extension," Kellar said.

Supervisor Steve Seymour and Artigues both said that the three entities agreed to meet more in the future, although no official date was set.

The governor's office is seeking to create a six-county board that would replace many of the existing waste water entities. Favre explained that whether the city wanted to join or not, an answer needed to be given because time is running out.

The date coincides with the last day state agencies, local governments, eligible private nonprofit organizations and tribal authorities can submit "Requests for Public Assistance" under the FEMA Public Assistance program.

If the debris or structure is not determined to be a public health or safety threat, it's the property owner's responsibility.

Sports

SSC sends three students to next level in gridiron

BY JOSEPH W. GEX, II
Staff Writer

National Signing Day for football took place on Wednesday, February 1st. Across the country, thousands of high school and junior college football players signed to play at the next level. Here in Bay St. Louis it was not any different, The St. Stanislaus Rock-a-chaws sent three more into the college ranks when JC Brignone (Mississippi State), Lance Cuevas (PRCC) and Kyle Hughes (PRCC) signed their national letters of intent.

Despite the chaos caused by Hurricane Katrina and the fact that the Rocks had to cancel their season due to the storm, that did not stop colleges seeking out the Rock players for their services. These three signees make the total number of college football players coming from SSC rise to 14 in the last three seasons.

SSC head football coach Casey Wittmann is the realization of a lot of dreams and hard work. This has been a trying year full of challenges for these young men and they have persevered. It makes me very proud to see them come back to finish their time here.

"Each one brings uniqueness to the table. Kyle Hughes, while only playing one year of varsity football, proved himself to be a talented raw prospect. He made the very most of his opportunity. Lance Cuevas has a tremendous upside because he is the best quarterback in the state. Once he gets to PRCC, he will show people how good he really is. He has lots of fire that is similar to another great Hancock county quarterback - Brett Favre. JC Brignone maybe the best defensive lineman I have ever been around. He

JC Brignone stands 6-1 and weighs 285 pounds. He is considered by many to be the best defensive line prospect in the state. He orally committed to MSU early in his senior year and stuck with that commitment through signing day.

Brignone commented,

"This is a great feeling to know that I will have this opportunity to continue to play football in the state of Mississippi. I am eager to play for Coach Sylvester Croom

and Mississippi State. They have always been honest with me from day one and that is something that I greatly respect about him and the program. They expect to play me at nose guard early."

Brother Ronald Hingle, principal of SSC, commented on the signees, "We are extremely proud of these young men. It has been an honor and privilege to be a part of their formation. All three of them have contributed to SSC in a unique way making our school better. We could not be prouder of their accomplishment. We are optimistic that we will hear a lot more about each one of these young men's contributions to their respective schools and beyond."

Wittmann elaborated that the Rocks expect to have a few more signees in the near future as Mike Rice is weighing his options with an appointment to West Point to become the head coachship for the gridiron from Princeton University. He is expected to make his decision shortly after the basketball season.

Buddy Schultz, Zach Elkins, Mike Deifik and Brennan Gordon all have possibilities open to them and will decide in the near future.

JC Brignone stands 6-1 and weighs 285 pounds. He is considered by many to be the best defensive line prospect in the state. He orally committed to MSU early in his senior year and stuck with that commitment through signing day.

Brignone commented, "This is a great feeling to know that I will have this opportunity to continue to play football in the state of Mississippi. I am eager to play for Coach Sylvester Croom

and the field. None of us would be where we are today without the constant support and encouragement from Coach Wittmann and the faculty and staff of St. Stanislaus."

Kyle Hughes may have only played one of varsity football but he made sure that it was an impact year. And, he has been rewarded for the impact he has made.

Hughes, a 6-2 260-pound defensive lineman, suited up for the Rocks in their first game of 2005. However, he had to finish his senior campaign across town at Bay High School where head coach Brennan Compresa and the Tigers welcomed him with open arms.

Hughes was a displaced football player like Brignone and Cuevas but made a difference in his adopted team. He tallied 44 total tackles and two sacks in seven games for the Tigers as they advanced to the first round of the state 4A playoffs.

Hughes stated, "I cannot wait to get to PRCC this summer and get to work. I am extremely thankful to have this opportunity since all that has happened to our community.

There is no way around the support that I received from SSC in terms of education, the opportunity to lift weights and the coaching staff. That has been the major factor in my success. Coach Wittman and Brother Ronald Hingle have always been extremely supportive of my endeavors here at SSC. However, I will never be able to thank Coach Brennan Compresa and the Bay High Tigers for giving me the opportunity at a normal student's life. I am indebted to them for the opportunity to play when we didn't have season."

Cuevas threw for over 1,100 yards and 12 touchdowns in 2005. He was also recruited by Northwestern State, Southeastern, North Alabama and Samford.

Cuevas commented, "I am excited about the opportunity to play quarterback for PRCC. They have a tremendous program.

Coach Casey Wittmann came to SSC three years ago and brought a change of attitude to the football team.

He has assembled a staff that are great teachers and mentors on and off

0) also pitched two scoreless innings to claim the win.

The Rocks' other win at PRCC came against Stone County in a 14-8 decision.

Whitman led the offensive attack with three hits including a homerun and a double. James Abraham also had three hits in the game for SSC.

Other multiple hits came from Henry, Stephen Keel, Nathan Kren and Ryan Ray. One of Keel's hits was a homerun. Pass Christian eighth-grader Cory McGee won the mile run at the University of

Kentucky High School Invitational meet last weekend. McGee, the youngest runner in the race, posted a winning time of 5:02.06.

McGee added a third place finish in the 800-meter run with a time of 2:14.55. Both times were personal bests for McGee and place her in the top 10 in the nation in both events. She qualified for the Nike Indoor National Championships in Landover, Md.

McGee has also been invited to participate in the National Intercollegiate Athletic Track and Field Championships.

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Area teams fall in hardwood playoffs

BY JOSEPH W. GEX, II
Staff Writer

The Pass Christian Pirates boys and girls basketball teams and the Hancock Lady Hawks all lost in the first round of the high state basketball playoffs.

The Pirates (13-12) ended the season on Tuesday night with a loss to Terry 58-54. Reggie McIntosh led Pass Christian with 27 points.

The Lady Pirates lost to McComb and no scoring details were available. The Lady Hawks (19-12) were eliminated by Jim Hill on Monday evening 53-39. The

Picayune boys and girls teams are still alive following wins over Mendenhall and Terry, respectively.

St. Stanislaus has jumped out to a 4-0 record early in the baseball season with two victories at the PRCC tournament in Poplarville.

The Rocks claimed an 8-7 decision over Forrest County in seven innings behind a two-run home run by Stephen Keel.

Keel finished with two hits and four RBIs. Tyler Henry, Dylan Drake and Brian Whitman all had two hits, as well. Henry (2-

0) also pitched two scoreless innings to claim the win.

The Rocks' other win at PRCC came against Stone County in a 14-8 decision.

Whitman led the offensive attack with three hits including a homerun and a double. James Abraham also had three hits in the game for SSC.

Other multiple hits came from Henry, Stephen Keel, Nathan Kren and Ryan Ray. One of Keel's hits was a homerun. Pass Christian eighth-grader Cory McGee won the mile run at the University of

FEMA offers limited hotel/motel extensions

As federal government emergency sheltering programs wind down in the States of Louisiana and Mississippi, work continues by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide longer-term housing assistance and housing locator services to all hurricane evacuees still remaining in hotels and motels nearly six months following Hurricane Katrina and Rita.

In Louisiana and Mississippi, where housing stock has been severely depleted due to hurricane damage, FEMA has extended all remaining hotel/motel authorization codes for evacuees occupying rooms in those two states to March 15, 2006. The implementation of an authorization code program by FEMA has allowed the agency to work with families on a case-by-case basis, extending codes as need-

ed to allow for individual situations. The more than 7,400 codes set to expire prior to March 15 in Louisiana and Mississippi will now expire on that date.

"We have extended all of those hurricane evacuees in hotels and motels in these two states as we continue to work with each family to determine their eligibility for FEMA's longer term housing assistance," said Acting FEMA Director David Paulison.

"However, we expect many to make their move to longer term housing way before that date."

Emergency sheltering offered on cruise ships in Louisiana and Mississippi will come to a close on March 1, with the cruise ships departing to go back into service just a few days later.

This has been an historic emergency sheltering effort that has assisted thousands of hurricane evacuees in their transition to longer-term

housing," said Paulison. "The process of recovery is difficult and we continue to provide rental assistance, apartment locator services and housing referrals to help evacuees take the next step in securing longer-term housing."

More than 780,000 households have been helped with temporary housing assistance in the form of cash rental assistance or direct manufactured housing. This includes the 80,000 families now living in FEMA-provided manufactured homes placed on individual properties or in group sites.

Through presidential declarations issued in 44 states and the District of Columbia, 32 participating states and local partners have placed approximately 60,000 families into apartments that are being reimbursed by FEMA, in addition to those who have located apartments on their own using FEMA rental assis-

tance. For the relative few families remaining in the FEMA hotel/motel emergency sheltering program nationwide, an authorization code program was implemented in early January. The authorization code program enabled FEMA to work more closely with families to help provide them with rental assistance or educate them on alternative housing options before their hotel subsidy ends.

Longer-term rental assistance from FEMA, available for up to 18 months after the declaration, is for those uninsured or underinsured individuals whose primary home — whether owned or rented — was damaged to such an extent as to make it uninhabitable.

FEMA subsidized hotel rooms are ending at least two weeks after occupants received rental assistance from FEMA or referrals to other services. Currently, more than

3,000 codes issued in those states other than Louisiana and Mississippi will expire March 1. As those families receive long-term rental assistance, they too will join the hundreds of thousands of others who have already made that transition. Most recently, 12,000 codes expired nationwide on Feb. 13, with 88 percent of those families eligible to receive FEMA housing assistance.

Hurricane Katrina has already resulted in the largest allotment of financial and housing assistance under FEMA's Individuals and Households Assistance Program (IHP) in the agency's history. The nearly \$5.2 billion is three times the assistance provided following California's Northridge Earthquake in 1994.

Hurricane Rita, which has surpassed the \$1 billion mark for IHP allocations, is approaching the \$1.1 billion provided to victims of the four major Florida hurricanes in 2004 combined.

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ATTENTION DECKHANDS CARLINE Marine will be in Covington conducting open interviews on Fri., March 3rd and Sat. March 4th, 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM at the Holiday Inn, 501 N. Hwy 190 in the Tammany Room at the Suites Building. Deckhand pay from \$137 - \$168 per day + benefits. 14/7 & 7/7 schedules offered. \$1000 sign on bonus.

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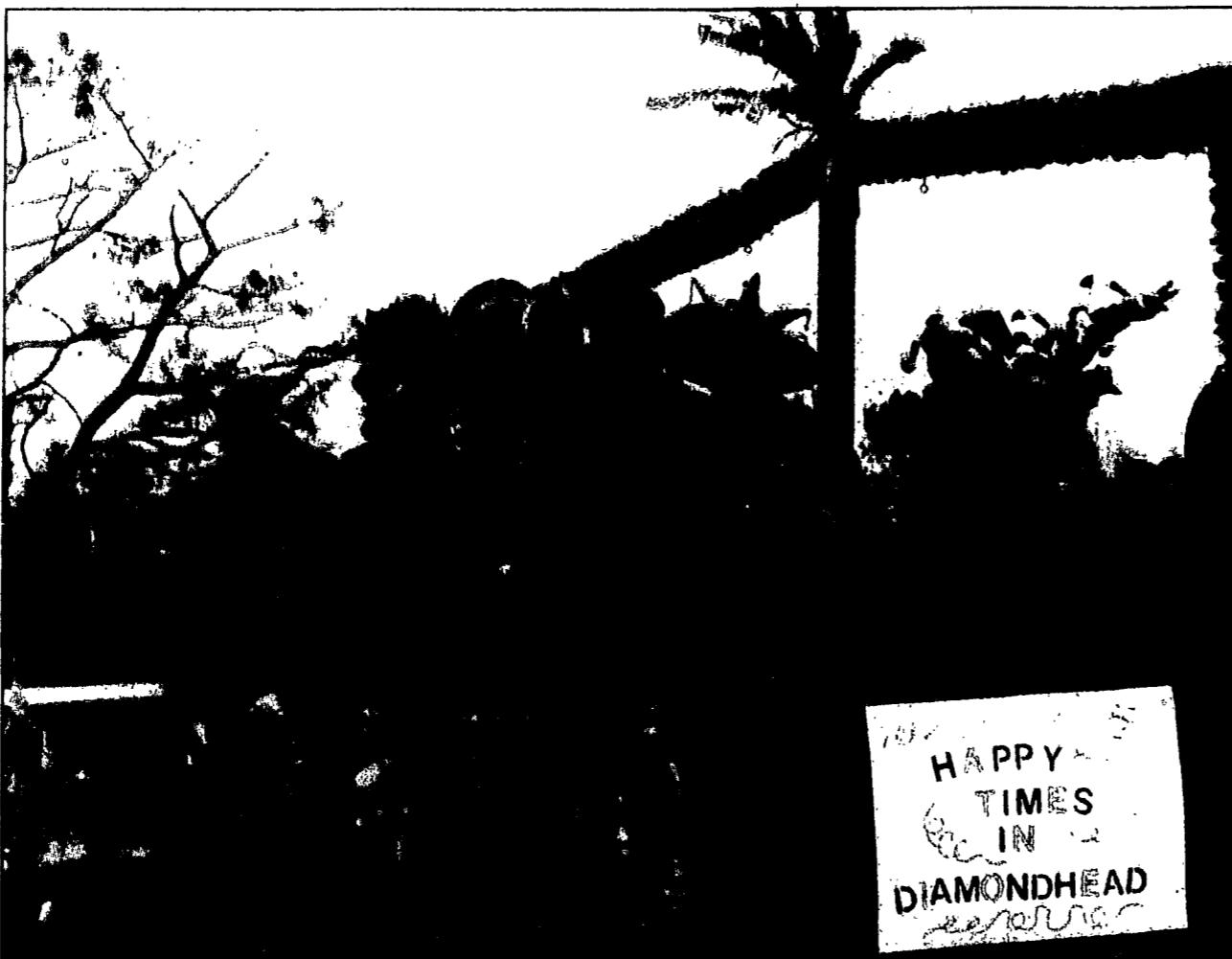
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Diamondhead Survives



The Krewe of Diamondhead and hundreds of Hancock Countians braved cold and rain last Saturday to prove once again that "Diamondhead Survives," this year's theme for the krewe's annual Mardi Gras parade.

Echo staff photos
by Geoff Belcher

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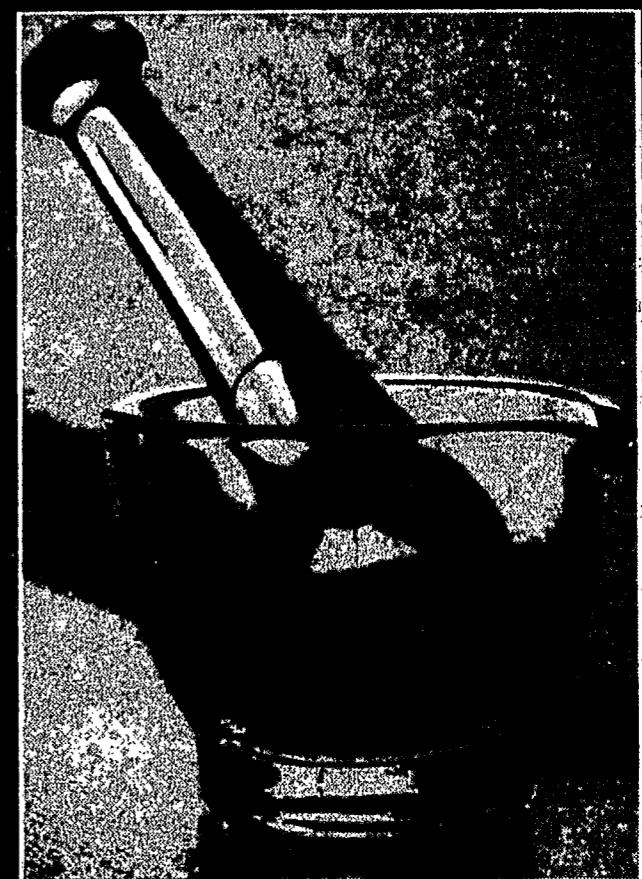
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